

From: Paul Kagan
To: Microsoft ATR
Date: 12/6/01 4:45pm
Subject: Microsoft Antitrust Case Settlement

To whom it may concern (if anyone),

I am dismayed at the terms of the Federal Government settlement with Microsoft. Microsoft has shown itself to be possibly the most voracious monopolist since the start of the industrial era, yet the settlement seems to contain neither punishment nor cure. Bill Gates has often claimed that his company has provided the engine for driving down the price of increasingly powerful computers. This is plainly not true. While Intel, Motorola, AMD, and other American innovators have brought us faster and more powerful machines at lower prices, smaller sizes and lower power consumption, the Microsoft component, Windows, has become larger, slower and dramatically more expensive per unit.

Microsoft has trumpeted their innovations, but has in reality offered mostly bundling of market tested ideas and features, developed by true innovators whom Microsoft then engulfed, pirated, or destroyed. Microsoft copied the graphical interface (Apple and PARC), the browser (NCSA and Netscape), the spreadsheet (Visicalc and Lotus Dev.), the high level database language (dBase II), the current disk file system, disk compression (Stak) and the PC based e-mail client. Where have they innovated? Universal Serial Bus (USB) was available in hardware before it was available in windows, and for the unlucky who had the first version of Windows 95, Microsoft never made an upgrade available; Windows 95 "rev B" and "C" were not available as upgrades, only as OEM new install versions. Therefore the only option was to buy a new OS or a new computer to get this feature, even if your system already had it! How has this helped American technology?

Microsoft still blaes about the "new Technology" in Windows NT, and about the tried and proven NT core in Windows XP. This technology is largely based on the venerable Digital Equipment Corp. OS, VMS, 1980's vintage software. They compete with more inventive "early adopters" in Internet portals (MSN vs. AOL), music distribution (Media Player vs. Real Networks), gaming (X Box vs. Playstation and Nintendo consoles), Internet finance (MS Money vs. Intuit Quicken, et. al.) Web Servers (MS IIS vs. Apache), and hand held organizers (Windows CE vs. Palm OS). In all cases, the Microsoft desktop hegemony is used to hobble other players. The sum total result is that America pays more to get less, and Microsoft enriches its investors at the expense of consumers and the US government.

Now the US Department of Justice is willing to help Microsoft to force its software on schools in the guise of a punishment? I believe those tears MS is crying are crocodile tears. The DOJ is actually helping to

shoehorn MS software into a market that has largely chosen to not use it, a market that is well served by Microsoft's only commercial competitor, Apple. I question the DOJ's understanding of this technology market and I challenge the validity of using taxpayer money to comfort an operation that has engaged in such egregious, illegal, and anti-American behaviors.

Sincerely,

Paul A Kagan